

LOBBY WATCH



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Unlimited Influence:

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85 Donors Dropped \$28 Million Into Texas' 2006 Elections

- **Super Donors Gave From \$100,000 To \$4.6 Million Apiece.**
- **They Account for 26 Percent of All Money From Individuals.**

Twenty-six percent of all the money that individuals contributed to Texas PACs and candidates in the first 18 months of the 2006 election cycle came from just 85 wealthy people (sometimes aided by spouses) who contributed anywhere from \$100,000 to \$4.6 million apiece. These mega-donors collectively dumped \$27,819,821 into the state political system from January 2005 through June 2006.

Houston homebuilder Bob Perry, who is best known for bankrolling Swift Boat attack ads on John Kerry, topped the list. So far this election cycle he has written \$4.6 million worth of state political checks that principally benefit Republicans. Perry gave \$270,265 of this money to Attorney General Greg Abbott, \$235,000 to Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst and \$130,000 to Governor Rick Perry (no relation). Since Governor Perry's election in 2002, Bob Perry has contributed a total of \$590,000 to the governor's reelection campaign.

San Antonio hospital bed magnate James Leininger ranked No. 2 among mega-donors. Leininger gained notoriety during the March GOP primary for his exorbitant attempt to rub out five moderate Republican lawmakers. Leininger bet \$2.5 million of his own money that he could elect five handpicked challengers who would advance his school-voucher agenda. Voters in three of these districts rejected Leininger's power grab, which nonetheless succeeded

in the other two.

Wealthy individuals with Democratic or Independent leanings also made the mega-donor list. These include eight trial lawyers who have long bankrolled Texas Democrats. This time, however, half of them are backing Carole Keeton Strayhorn's independent challenge of Governor Perry. Shampoo magnate John McCall also poured \$850,000 into the Independent gubernatorial campaign of his friend Kinky Friedman. While McCall has disavowed any interest in selling the state shampoo, people who do have a political agenda dominate the mega-donor list.

Texas is one of just a few remaining states that allow wealthy tycoons to buy controlling interests in public officials. Because Texas imposes no limits on what individuals can contribute to a state political campaign, Texans are entitled to as much political representation as they can afford.

A coalition of Texas reform groups is pushing to limit mega-donors from giving an aggregate total of more than \$100,000 to state PACs and candidates in each election. Reps. Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio) and Mark Strama (D-Austin) have pledged to introduce such a bill—backed by Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Houston)—in the next session. Federal law already imposes a similar cap on individual contributions to all federal PACs and candidates. Texas needs \$100,000 caps. Enough is enough.

Texas' \$100,000 Donor Club

(Individual Donations to State PACs & Candidates, January 2005 through June 2006)

Amount	Contributor	City	Business
\$4,569,265	Bob & Doylene Perry	Houston	Perry Homes
\$4,011,875	James Leininger	San Antonio	Kinetic Concepts, Inc. (hospital beds)
\$999,321	Fred Baron & Lisa Blue	Dallas	Baron & Budd law firm
\$901,348	T. Boone Pickens, Jr.	Dallas	BP Capital (oil, water investing)
\$851,000	John Herschel McCall	Spicewood	Armstrong McCall Beauty (shampoo magnate)
\$767,021	Charles C. Butt	San Antonio	HEB Grocery Co.
\$654,400	Harold Simmons	Dallas	Contran Corp. (investing, nuke waste)
\$653,329	Mikal C. Watts	Corpus Christi	Watts Law Firm
\$615,354	George & Amanda Ryan	Dallas	Ryan & Co. (tax consulting)
\$509,860	Walter Umphrey	Beaumont	Provost & Umphrey Law Firm
\$481,090	John Eddie Williams, Jr.	Houston	Williams Bailey Law Firm
\$386,300	David & Martha Alameel	Dallas	Jefferson Dental Clinics
\$371,894	John & Barbara Elizabeth Nau	Houston	Silver Eagle Distributors (beer)
\$360,239	Lonnie 'Bo' Pilgrim	Pittsburg	Pilgrim's Pride Poultry
\$345,100	Geoffrey Raynor	Fort Worth	Q Funding (investing)
\$327,812	Louis A. Beecherl III	Dallas	Beecherl Co's (oil fortune)
\$307,934	Harlan Crow	Dallas	Crow Holdings (real estate)
\$297,250	Michael Stevens	Houston	Michael Stevens Interests, Inc. (apartments)
\$281,000	Alice L. Walton	Mineral Wells	Wal-Mart
\$274,500	James D. "Doug" Pitcock, Jr.	Houston	Williams Brothers Construction
\$265,760	Thomas Dan Friedkin	Houston	Friedkin Companies, Inc. (auto dealer)
\$255,758	Richard Weekley	Houston	Weekley Properties/Texans for Lawsuit Reform
\$241,500	Robert Rowling	Irving	TRT Holdings, Inc. (oil/hotels)
\$240,737	Russell Kelley	Austin	Public Strategies lobby firm
\$233,250	Robert C. McNair, Jr.	Houston	Cogen Technologies/Houston Texans
\$221,370	Russell W. Budd	Dallas	Baron & Budd law firm
\$206,500	Peter Holt	Blanco	Holt Co's (construction equipment)
\$200,450	Dian Graves Owen Stai	Abilene	Owen Healthcare, Inc. (drugs)
\$200,000	Stevan Hammond	Dallas	Marketing Investors Corp.
\$200,000	Kenny Troutt	Dallas	Mt. Vernon Investments (telecom)
\$197,000	Maconda O'Connor	Houston	Brown & Root (construction) heir
\$192,250	Dan L. Duncan	Houston	Enterprise Products Partners (chemicals)
\$182,491	Greg LaMantia	McAllen	L & F Distributors (beer)
\$177,600	Richard Mithoff	Houston	Mithoff & Jacks law firm
\$176,359	John Victor Lattimore, Jr.	Mc Kinney	Lattimore Materials (concrete)
\$175,088	Paul L. Foster	El Paso	Western Refining Co.
\$171,900	Ricardo Weitz	Houston	Auto Dealer
\$171,000	Ralph Ellis, Jr.	Irving	Belmont Oil & Gas Corp.
\$166,000	Gerald Ridgely, Jr.	Dallas	Ryan & Company (tax consulting)
\$159,000	Richard Scott	Houston	Trans-Global Solutions (shipping)
\$158,054	Michael B. Boylan	Houston	Houston Property Management Corp.
\$156,500	William A. Boothe	Dallas	Boothe Eye Care & Laser Center
\$156,197	Ned S. Holmes	Houston	Parkway Investments (real estate)
\$155,503	Kenneth P. Banks	Schulenburg	International Muffler Co.
\$155,077	HB 'Bartel' Zachry, Jr.	San Antonio	Zachry Construction Corp.

\$154,950	H. Ross Perot, Jr.	Plano	Hillwood Development Group
\$154,894	James D. Dannenbaum	Houston	Dannenbaum Engineering
\$153,829	Patrick J. Moran	Houston	Moran Resources (oil)
\$153,000	Joseph F. Phillips	Mission	Convenience store chain owner
\$152,500	Joseph D. Jamail	Houston	Jamail & Kolius law firm
\$151,000	James Trester	Plano	Ryan & Co. (tax consulting)
\$150,250	Frank Homer	Paris	Retired Sonic restaurant franchiser
\$150,000	Ray L. Hunt	Dallas	Hunt Consolidated, Inc. (developer, oil)
\$149,750	B.J. 'Red' McCombs	San Antonio	Red McCombs Automotive Group
\$145,250	Edith Jones O'Donnell	Dallas	O'Donnell Foundation (banking)
\$141,000	Charles W. Tate	Sugarland	Capital Royalty (investing)
\$140,500	Julia Jones Matthews	Abilene	Dodge Jones Foundation (oil)
\$137,100	Randall G. Goss	Dallas	U.S. Risk (insurer)
\$135,505	Kent R. Hance	Austin	Hance Scarborough Wright ... lobby firm
\$133,500	John Speer	Houston	Royce Homes
\$131,287	W. Mark Lanier	Houston	Lanier Law Firm
\$130,500	Charles E. Hurwitz	Houston	MAXXAM, Inc. (investing, gambling)
\$129,000	Johnny Baker	Houston	Baker Managers (real estate)
\$128,783	Charles Berndon Lawrence	Houston	Kirby Corp. (shipping)
\$125,750	Barkley J. Stuart	Dallas	Glazer's Wholesale (alcohol)
\$124,500	Richard Thompson	Lucas	Ryan & Co. (tax consulting)
\$123,000	George C. Hixon	San Antonio	Hixon Properties (real estate)
\$120,000	A. Earl Swift	Houston	Swift Energy Co.
\$119,185	Charles Wood, Jr.	Dallas	Dallas Fire Insurance Co.
\$116,040	Thomas W. Pirtle	Houston	O'Quinn & Laminack law firm
\$115,580	Robert D. Gillikin	Dallas	Cummins Southern Plains, Inc. (engines)
\$114,496	James I. Perkins, Jr.	Rusk	Citizens First Bank
\$112,000	Meredith J. Long	Houston	Meredith Long & Co. (art gallery)
\$111,750	Gordon T. Graves	Austin	Multimedia Games, Inc. (gambling)
\$111,000	W. Marvin Rush	San Antonio	Rush Enterprise, Inc. (truck dealer)
\$107,000	Earle A. Nye	Dallas	TXU Energy Corp. (retired)
\$106,000	William A. McMinn	Houston	Sterling Group (chemicals)
\$105,350	Lowry Mays	San Antonio	Clear Channel Entertainment (radio)
\$101,377	Carl F. Raba, Jr.	San Antonio	Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc. (engineering)
\$101,155	Steve W. Sterquell II	Amarillo	American Housing Foundation
\$101,054	Larry Anders	Dallas	Summit Alliance Co's (insurer)
\$100,500	James L. Huffines, Jr.	Dallas	Huffines Auto Dealerships
\$100,250	Robert D. McLane, Jr.	Temple	McLane Co., Inc. (grocery supply)
\$100,000	Tim Gill	Denver	Quark software founder, Gill Foundation (gay rights)
\$100,000	Dawn Arnall	Los Angeles	Ameriquest Mortgage